

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES
RELATED TO
GRADUATE STUDENTS

**Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation
Biology
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523**

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Colorado State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and complies with all federal and Colorado state laws, regulations, and executive orders regarding affirmative action requirements in all programs. The Office of Equal Opportunity is located in Room 101, Student Services. In order to assist Colorado State University in meeting its affirmative action responsibilities, ethnic minorities, women, and other protected class members are encouraged to apply and to so identify themselves.

OVERVIEW

This overview describes the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology at Colorado State University. The first students graduated with a major in wildlife management in 1949 in the Department of Forest Recreation and Wildlife Conservation, which existed from 1947 to 1966, headed by J.V.K. Wagar. The Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology was established in 1966. Gustav A. Swanson served as Department Head from 1966 to 1975. In 1979, the Department, headed by Douglas L. Gilbert, moved to the old Veterinary Medicine Building, renamed for J.V.K. Wagar, where all the elements of the Department were finally together. Robert S. Cook became head in 1981, and was succeeded by Alan P. Covich in 1993. Stephen A. Flickinger became interim head in the fall of 1998 and was succeeded by H. Randall Robinette in 1999. The department name was changed to its current name in July 2006. Kenneth R. Wilson became interim head in the fall of 2006 and head in 2007.

Quality graduate education was enhanced with the founding in 1947 of the Colorado Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. A fisheries unit was established in 1963 and the two units were combined in 1984 to form the current Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. Colorado State University, the U.S. Geological Survey, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the Wildlife Management Institute are major cooperators in the Unit program. Wildlife Extension gained its own identity in 1966. A second extension position was added a decade later for a specialist in animal damage control and partial support was provided for a specialist in fisheries and aquaculture until 2003. In 2005, much support for extension activities was withdrawn. The diverse outreach programs have won national recognition for hunter education, 4-H youth activities, and wildlife enterprise on private lands. Cooperative Extension and the Colorado Division of Wildlife have provided major funding for these programs. The Larval Fish Laboratory was established in 1978. The Laboratory soon gained a national reputation for research, service, and education for their study of early life history and ecology of fishes.

Graduate degrees offered are: Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology. In 2005, a 'continuing education' (Plan C) Master degree for professionals with five years of experience was instituted; this degree is called a Masters of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, i.e., is not designated as an M.S. degree. The Department has maintained a stable and nationally recognized graduate research program that is primarily funded by external contracts and grants. Based on national surveys of universities, we continue to rank among the top two of the 90 wildlife programs in the country. Nation-wide rankings of productivity and citations of publications in leading journals in wildlife biology show that our faculty and graduate students rank among the top of all wildlife programs.

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook describes Department policies and supplements Graduate School policies described in Colorado State's *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*, *Handbook on Graduate Study*, *Guidelines for Graduate Advising & Committee Service*, and *Thesis Manual*. Graduate students in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology are advised to consult the Graduate School publications on the Graduate School website (<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/current-students/student-resources/>) and this handbook for guidance. The most recent revision of this handbook will be distributed to all new graduate students and faculty in the Department, and all graduate students and faculty in the Department will receive a copy of the handbook whenever it is revised.

ADMISSIONS STANDARDS

The Department receives a large number of inquiries annually for our graduate program. Approximately 100 students apply for the eight to ten openings available each year. We support most of our graduate students with funding; this and a desire to ensure close contact between students and faculty limits the number of graduate students admitted to our program .

Admission decisions are based on academic performance, GRE scores, letters of recommendations, work experience, evidence of scientific productivity, leadership qualities and a personal statement. Students with a cumulative undergraduate GPA above 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) and combined scores of 1200 or better on the Verbal and Quantitative portions of the GRE Test meet minimal requirements. We have many highly qualified applicants; therefore, if you do not exceed these minimum standards, you are not encouraged to apply.

Admission into the graduate program is not constrained to a particular date; rather admissions are done on an 'as-needed' basis and depending on available funding. The exception is for the Plan C Master program. The Plan C Master program is a coursework-only program focused on professionals with at least 5 years of experience. Only five Plan C students are allowed simultaneously and thus admission is of a directly competitive nature. Plan C admission decisions will be made starting February 1, with student's acceptance of offers needed by April 1.

If your undergraduate degree is in an area outside of the physical, chemical, or biological sciences such as liberal arts, business, education, or psychology, you probably are not eligible for our M.S. program. One option may be to complete a second bachelor's degree or take course work to strengthen your background for possible graduate admission later. We generally require that students earn a M.S. degree before applying to our Ph.D. program. Prospective graduate students see <http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/fwcb-graduate-degrees/> for more information.

CHAIRPERSON OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND GRADUATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chairperson of Graduate Studies: The Department Head may appoint a Department chairperson of graduate studies, who will be responsible to the Department Head in matters relating to the graduate program. The chairperson will coordinate and administer for the Department all matters related to graduate studies and will chair the

Graduate Affairs Committee. The length of the appointment is mutually agreed upon through discussions with the Department Head.

Committee: The Department Head will appoint a Graduate Affairs Committee, which will consist of at least three, voting Department faculty, which includes the chairperson. This committee will maintain a list of policies related to graduate affairs, which will describe obligations of graduate students and of faculty serving on graduate committees. Changes to these policies require approval at a Department faculty meeting by majority vote. Committee membership will be announced to the faculty at the time of appointment. The committee will meet as necessary. The committee will choose students for the five positions in the Plan C Master program by February 1.

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

1. The graduate student advisory committee shall approve the student's program of study and advise the student concerning the planning of his/her research (Plan A), professional paper/approved project (Plan B), or course of study (Plan C) (see the next section in this guidebook). Experience in planning a study program and writing proposals is an important part of graduate education. The committee must approve the student's study plan before research (Plan A) or the Plan B project can be initiated, and at the beginning of a Plan C program. The committee will advise the student concerning the execution and reporting of his/her research or project, administer the comprehensive (M.S. – Plan A and B) or preliminary (Ph.D.) examination, and administer the final examination as a defense of thesis, dissertation, or professional paper.
2. Graduate student committees will be composed of the following types of members, all of whom may vote on graduate student exams and thesis defenses:
 - a. M.S. graduate student committees must have at least 3 regular academic faculty members.

- b. Ph.D. graduate student committees must have 4 faculty members; 2 must be regular academic faculty members within the department and 1 must be a regular faculty member from outside the department.
 - c. In each case, 2 of these members must be regular academic Department faculty members
 - d. Regular academic faculty members for graduate student committees include the following University designated terms: regular full-time, regular part-time, and special appointments. Regular academic Department faculty members also include leaders of the Colorado Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and Research Scientists in the Research Scientist/Scholar Career Track that have been approved for this status per Department code.
 - e. Each committee (except for Plan C) must also include a regular academic faculty member from another Department of the University. This member is nominated with submission of the student's Program of Study (GS Form 6) and ultimately appointed by the Graduate School.
 - f. Affiliate Faculty are appointed by the Department Head on recommendation by the faculty, but are not regular academic faculty. Affiliate Faculty, and Research Scientists not yet approved for 'regular academic Department faculty member' status, may serve as voting members on graduate committees in excess of the 3-4 regular academic faculty, and may serve as co-advisors, if approved per Department code.
3. In addition to the committee members referred to in the above paragraph, graduate students are urged to invite members outside of regular academic faculty to serve on their committees to increase the student's exposure to professionals outside of those at Colorado State University. Any voting committee member should have a degree equal to or higher than the candidate's proposed degree.

4. Committee members who must be absent for an important committee function or for a semester or longer should be temporarily replaced. Note that committee members that are off campus during an oral exam may participate via electronic link provided the arrangement is approved in advance by the Graduate School (see the Graduate School website for more details- <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/current-students/student-resources/>). The Department Head, with concurrence of the member being replaced, shall designate an eligible replacement by memo to the Graduate School, noting the duration of the replacement. Temporary replacement of a committee member from outside the Department must be approved by the Graduate School. Individuals who are not academic faculty may not replace a faculty member on committees. Permanent committee replacements are made using the Petition for Committee Member Changes (GS Form 9A).

RESEARCH PROJECT STUDY PLAN

Students conducting research are expected to develop a study plan of their research that will be approved by their graduate advisory committee before the research commences (specifically, before the student begins data collection). The study plan should include the following:

1. Statement of the research problem;
2. Review of literature pertinent to the problem;
3. Statement of the value of the work, i.e., justification for why this is a worthwhile project that justifies the degree to be awarded;
4. Objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested with the research;
5. Methods to be used, including description of the study area (if appropriate), data collection methods, and statistical analysis of the expected data;
6. When data are collected, justification of the sample size to be collected, including a power analysis for the primary hypotheses to be tested or expected confidence interval width for parameters to be estimated;

7. Expected publications, including order of authorship for each publication;
8. Budget; and
9. Schedule or other timetable.

Typically, the study plan will be approved by the student's graduate advisory committee during a meeting of the committee. Approval by the graduate advisory committee implies that the research described is adequate to meet the requirements of the graduate degree being pursued if the student successfully completes the data collection, analysis, and the necessary manuscript(s) describing the research results.

READINGS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Early in his/her program, each graduate student in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology is expected to discuss a personal reading program with her/his major advisor and graduate advisory committee members.

Recommendations of the faculty for graduate student reading can focus on: 1) history of science, conservation, and fishery and wildlife biology; 2) preparation for research; and 3) keeping current on developments in fishery and wildlife biology and environmental issues.

REQUIRED REGISTRATION

All students admitted to a graduate program at Colorado State University are required to be continuously registered in the fall and spring semester throughout their degree programs. This policy applies from the time of first enrollment through the graduation term. Students may fulfill this requirement by registering for any graduate credit-bearing course (regular or non-regular). As an alternative, students may opt for a Continuous Registration (CR) status. Registration for CR status is accomplished in the same way as registration for courses. Section ID numbers appear in the class schedule under the CR prefix. Students registering for CR will be assessed a fee for each semester of CR registration. Students graduating in summer term are required to be

registered for at least one credit or CR. See the Graduate Enrollment Requirement. See Graduate School website for details: <http://www.graduateschool.colostate.edu/>

**PROGRAMS OF STUDY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN FISH, WILDLIFE, AND
CONSERVATION BIOLOGY**

1. The student is encouraged to use the Graduate Student Program Design form (see appendix) as a first step in designing a program of study. During this process, the graduate committee shall consider the student's background and goals and the educational requirements of his/her research or project. The objective of the program is to prepare the student for service in fish, wildlife and conservation biology or related sub-disciplines (e.g., landscape ecology, molecular ecology, ecotoxicology). The committee may consider transcripts and references and use informal discussions with the student. It may elect to administer a formal diagnostic examination in assessing the student's background and program needs. The program of study will include course work but may also include independent study or service learning experience to aid the student in achieving a breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding appropriate to the degree being sought. Achievement of this knowledge and understanding will be tested in the comprehensive (M.S. Plan A and B) or preliminary (Ph.D.) examination.
2. Each graduate student registered full-time on campus must enroll for at least one fishery or wildlife seminar (FW 692) during an academic year. Seminars are taken on a pass/fail basis. For the semester in which the student presents a seminar, two credits may be taken and a letter grade is assigned by the student's adviser and committee members.
3. Programs of study for Plan A M.S. students must include at least 30 credits of study in course numbers 300 or higher. At least 16 of the credits must be course numbers 500 or higher, and of the 16, at least 12 must be in formal (regular) courses.

4. Programs of study for Plan B M.S. students in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology are more stringent than the general CSU requirements. FWCB students must take at least 36 credits of study; 24 credits must be in courses and seminars. The 24 credits are to include at least 16 credits of course numbers 500 or higher, and of the 16, at least 12 must be formal (regular) courses.
5. Programs of study for Plan C MS students in Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology are more stringent than the general CSU requirements. FWCB students must take at least 36 credits; 24 credits at 500-level or higher formal (regular) classes.
6. Ph.D. programs of study require a minimum of 72 semester credits beyond the baccalaureate. A maximum of 30 credits may be accepted from a master's degree. At least 21 credits beyond the M.S. degree must be at the 500 level or above. Distribution of these credits between regular and other courses is unrestricted.
7. Regular courses listed on programs of study are to be at the 300 or higher level (except courses listed as "background"). Background courses cannot be counted toward graduation; however, grades earned in such courses are included in computation of the cumulative GPA. Graduate students must have a 3.0 GPA to graduate.
8. Regular courses listed on programs of study are to be taken for traditional grades.
9. All graduate students in the Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology are expected to have completed a core of foundational courses including basic biology, ecology, vertebrate biology and management, and statistics.
10. Credits taken to meet the Ph.D. "language" requirement are not to be included as credits for the Program of Study for the Ph.D. degree. This is discussed in detail in the section of this document on the Ph.D. language requirement.
11. FW 696 A/B Group Study (Orientation) should be taken by all graduate students in the Department the first fall semester they are on campus.

12. Each M.S. and Ph.D. student is required to present the results of his or her thesis research or Plan B project orally at a Department seminar. This requirement shall be administered by the student's committee. In addition, all graduate students are strongly encouraged to present their research at professional meetings.
13. All Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to teach at least 1 semester within the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology.

PRIORITIES FOR THE ASSIGNMENT OF GRADUATE STUDENT OFFICES

Office space in the Wagar Building is limited. Consequently, students in their second or later semester of residence will have priority over other students in their first semester of residence. Considerations in assigning office space may also include those graduate students who are not actively involved in research and course work and, thus, may not have a real need for office space. Regardless, an attempt will be made to find office space for all graduate students.

EXAMINATIONS

1. Department faculty members are to be notified of M.S. (Plan A and B) and Ph.D. final oral examinations at least one week in advance of the time of said examinations. These examinations are for defense of theses or dissertations. M.S. final oral examinations are announced in the Department but need not be advertised publicly. Ph.D. final oral examinations are open to all members of the University community and to the public. The student's adviser must notify the Graduate School at least two weeks before the examination. The Graduate School will publicize the defense in a weekly notice accessible through the Internet at CSU.
2. Preliminary examinations for Ph.D. students include both written as well as oral parts. The student's adviser must notify the Graduate School of the target date

for the oral preliminary examination at least one week before the target date. The oral examination must be held within six days before or after the target date. The student is responsible for obtaining the Report of Preliminary Examination for the Ph.D. Degree (GS Form 16) and returning it, appropriately completed, after the conclusion of the examination.

3. No individual outside a student's graduate committee may attend the M.S. comprehensive exams or Ph.D. preliminary exams without an invitation from the student's adviser issued after a conference in which that adviser and the student to be examined agree upon who shall receive invitations. Other students and faculty not on the student's committee may be admitted only with such an invitation. The Department Head, Major Chairman, Chairman of Graduate Affairs, and any faculty member who has a close relationship with the student will routinely be invited. Invitations should be issued at least 1 week before the examination.
4. Voting at all examinations is limited to members of the student's graduate advisory committee (see section on Graduate Student Advisory Committees). A majority vote is required to pass an examination; a tie vote is interpreted as failure to pass an examination.
5. Examinations may not be suspended after they have begun. Unsatisfactory performance must be documented, and an examination in progress may not be postponed.
6. If the committee approves, a candidate who fails a final examination may be given the opportunity to be reexamined once and may be required to complete further work for that reexamination. The reexamination must be held not earlier than 2 months or later than 12 months after the first examination.
7. The student is responsible for taking the Report of Final Examination Results (GS Form 24) to his/her examination and returning it completed and signed to the Graduate School office within 2 working days after results are known; this must be done before the end of the eleventh week of the graduation term for fall

and spring semesters or before the end of the fifth week of the eight-week summer term. The Graduate School determines exact dates.

8. Graduate committees are required to complete the Outcomes Assessment form (see appendix) for all graduate students. The student's advisor will be responsible for making sure the form is completed and turned in to the Department.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FOR M.S. STUDENTS

All Plan A and B M.S. candidates must take a comprehensive examination no later than during the semester before the term in which they plan to graduate. This examination can be repeated, but no sooner than two months after it is failed. The examination will be administered by the student's committee and may be in written, oral, or both forms. The examination will probe the student's breadth of knowledge in such subjects as wildlife or fishery biology, basic biology, ecology, statistics, the profession, current events, and previous course work.

The examination will be graded Pass, Remedial, or Fail. In the case of failure, the exam must be retaken. A remedial grade will require additional study to satisfy one or more committee members or the Department Head that some deficiency has been corrected. Conditions for resolving a remedial grade will be specified when the grade is given. Additional study may include course work, specified readings, or discussions with experts, including committee members. When the conditions for resolving the remedial grade have been satisfied, the grade will be changed to pass. The format for reporting this examination is shown in the Appendix of this guidebook. This examination is a Department requirement; results are filed in the student's folder after copies are given to the student and adviser.

THESIS / DISSERTATION

A Graduate School Thesis Manual is available from the Graduate School

(see Graduate School website).

1. A copy of the thesis in its sub-final form must be available to committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled final oral examination. A copy addressing changes suggested by the committee should be available at the time of the examination.
2. A student may include material that he or she has published in a thesis or dissertation if his/her CSU graduate advisory committee participated in the planning of the research which led to the publication.
3. Results of many graduate student research projects deserve publication in journals of science, proceedings of symposia, or other generally available literature. When publication of research is warranted, students are expected to pursue publication. Graduate student committee members should be allowed to review any manuscripts that are to be included in a thesis or dissertation before submission to a journal. A student's major professor who has made a significant contribution in developing or promoting the research proposal, or in data collection or analysis, and in manuscript development will usually deserve junior authorship on resulting publications. If, after 12 months past graduation or 12 months after the student has left the University, a student has not made substantial progress toward publishing the research (usually at least a draft manuscript), his/her major professor who has made a significant investment in the research may proceed to publish the material or present it at a professional meeting and assume first authorship with the student as junior author.

LANGUAGE AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

Because of the nature of the Ph.D. degree, the Ph.D. program should include additional requirements beyond the minimum 72 semester credits. Guidelines for these requirements consist of the following:

1. Knowledge of 1 foreign language in depth or

2. Reading knowledge in 2 foreign languages or
3. Twelve semester credits (with traditional grades of A, B, or C) in a subject that augments the student's field of study and previous education or
4. Six semester credits (with traditional grades of A, B, or C) in each of 2 subjects that augment the student's field of study and previous education or
5. Reading knowledge in 1 foreign language and 6 semester credits (with traditional grades of A, B, or C) in a subject that augments the student's field of study and previous education.

Subjects that augment the student's field of study and education may be in the social sciences (e.g., economics, communications, anthropology, history), may provide tools used in teaching or research (e.g., statistics, microscopy, pedagogy), or may be sciences related to fish, wildlife and conservation biology (e.g., chemistry, nutrition, forest science). Ultimately, the student's graduate advisory committee and the Department Head must approve and document these subjects for augmentation on the Language and Other Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology form (see appendix). Course work in these subjects should be taken at levels equal to or higher than those required for undergraduates in the Department.

REPORTING OF GRADES FOR GRADUATE COURSES

Grades for graduate courses, including seminars, research or thesis credit, and independent study, are not to be assigned by secretaries or other substitutes for the instructor/adviser without express written permission. In situations where the instructor/adviser cannot be reached, an "I" (incomplete) should be given; the appropriate grade can be assigned later.

**UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE THAT CAN LEAD
TO DISMISSAL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Requirements for graduate students to remain in good academic standing are published in Colorado State University's *Graduate and Professional Bulletin* (see Graduate School website <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/current-students/bulletin.aspx>). Failure to maintain good academic standing may result in 1) academic probation, which may ultimately lead to termination of a graduate student's program, or 2) immediate dismissal for serious infractions.

1. If a student's performance in course work, research or other assignments is judged unsatisfactory by the student's adviser, the adviser will notify (in writing) the student, the remainder of the student's graduate advisory committee, the Department Head, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Such notice must justify the conclusions regarding unsatisfactory performance and specify the conditions and schedule for rectifying the deficiency. If the student's graduate advisory committee agrees with the conclusions and conditions, the student will be placed on academic probation. The probationary period extends for one semester beyond that in which it begins. If the graduate advisory committee agrees that good academic standing has not been regained by the end of the probationary period, the adviser will notify the Graduate School and the student will be dismissed by the Graduate School. A student may appeal the judgment of unsatisfactory performance or the dismissal through Department or Graduate School grievance procedures.
2. Grounds for immediate dismissal of graduate students include a) falsification of data, b) cheating on examinations or other assignments, c) plagiarism, or d) theft or misuse of University equipment or funds (this includes inappropriate use of internet, email, and telephones). In the event of such an infraction, the student's graduate advisory committee or the Department's Graduate Affairs Committee may recommend immediate dismissal. Such recommendation must be

documented in writing, with justification, and submitted to the student, to the Department Head, and to the Dean of the Graduate School for final action. The student may appeal the dismissal through the Graduate School grievance procedure. The best way to avoid difficulties regarding proper use of University funds or equipment is to first discuss any issue or uncertainty with your graduate advisor.

PERMITS REQUIRED FOR HANDLING VERTEBRATES **DURING GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Students who will be handling, collecting, or marking vertebrates must have a scientific collection permit issued by the fish and game department in each state. Persons handling animals should contact the appropriate local state agency prior to any work. Application forms for handling, collecting, or marking in Colorado are available from the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) website. You may want to discuss planned collection procedures with CDOW personnel (e.g., managers, biologists, or researchers in the area of your study) prior to submitting the application. Provide one to two months lead time for processing the application. A report of the previous year's collecting activities is required before new permits will be issued; in Colorado there is an online reporting procedure. Violating regulations associated with scientific collecting and marking jeopardizes the relationship between the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Violations can result in a citation and conviction that could be detrimental to securing natural resource employment after graduation.

Students and their faculty advisors must comply with all animal care and use requirements as stipulated by Colorado State University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). This includes approval of research protocols for animal handling prior to the beginning of any study (see CSU IACUC website for more info).

In addition to the above state-required permits, federal permits are required for handling, collecting, or marking threatened and endangered species and for handling

migratory birds. Students planning to handle migratory birds should contact, if available, a faculty member having a federal banding permit who can provide advice about the process; otherwise, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Students needing to disturb threatened or endangered species in any way should see their adviser before contacting a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional office. Some federal agencies require use or collection permits, in addition, to state or FWS permits, e.g., National Parks and FWS Refuges, so if applicable to your study, contact these entities well in advance of any field work.

MAINTAINING DIVERSITY AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS

In the interest of maintaining or increasing diversity among our graduate students, the Department faculty has endorsed the following statement: The faculty of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology recognize the importance to CSU and the various conservation professions of educating a diverse graduate student population. The faculty will continue to (1) encourage women, minority, foreign, and nontraditional students to apply for admission to graduate programs and (2) make every reasonable effort to accept and retain well-qualified representatives of these groups. The Department also will continue to work with state and federal resource agencies to educate students through such programs as Cooperative Education Agreements and will declare its interest in this course of action by letter to appropriate agencies.

STIPEND AND TUITION GUIDELINES

Graduate assistants are required to register for at least one credit of course work and/or research or Continuous Registration (CR) status during fall and spring terms, not including audited courses. Students on other forms of financial assistance should register for the number of credits required by the sponsor. The Graduate School determines the minimum amount allowed for stipends. GTA positions are paid the

minimum stipend; GRA stipends are dependent on the research grant and may be salaried at a higher level. Fees are the responsibility of the student in all cases.

Graduate students coming from out of state and funded on research assistantships (RA) are eligible for a “tuition premium” from the Graduate School for their first two semesters. This premium is a waiver of the non-resident portion of tuition.

Students on less than a 50% RA appointment (i.e., <20 hours per week) will receive a pro-rated portion of the tuition premium in the first year. After the second semester students will be assessed non-resident tuition unless they have established residency.

To avoid having to pay non-resident tuition, it is essential that graduate students be aware of the State’s residency policy. Non-resident graduate students seeking resident tuition must establish residency before the beginning of their first semester at CSU.

See the Student Financial Services website page on “Determination of In-State Classification for Tuition Purposes” at <http://sfs.colostate.edu/l20000.cfm> for details.

POLICY FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is a professional position for which duties and schedules cannot always be rigidly prescribed. As is true for faculty, a person holding a GTA position must be flexible, adaptable, and committed to fulfilling the mission of the Department, rather than being concerned about rigid work rules. These guidelines are intended to facilitate the announcement of, and application and selection process for, GTA’s in a fair and efficient manner. However, in special circumstances, e.g., the need to fill an unexpected vacancy or sudden availability of a new GTA position, some guidelines may be reasonably modified or suspended. This policy also addresses the responsibilities and performance evaluation of GTA's, their training and orientation, and prerequisites entitled to them.

General Responsibilities for Graduate Teaching Assistants

The following are guidelines for GTA responsibilities. Faculty wishing to supersede any of these guidelines should inform their GTA's in writing with a copy to the Department Head. To ensure that the objectives outlined below can be achieved, the GTA is entitled to specific written instructions from the faculty in charge of the course. Some professors expect independence and initiative on the part of the GTA, but the bounds should nonetheless be specified. A GTA is expected to:

1. Attend, as required by the faculty in charge, all meetings of the class in which the GTA may be lecturing, conducting laboratories, leading discussions, or grading papers or exams. Failure to meet regularly scheduled classes for which the GTA is responsible may be grounds for termination of the GTA appointment. If there is good reason for absence, the GTA must inform the faculty and arrange for a substitute.
2. Consult with the faculty in charge of the course as to grading policies, course content, procedures, and to adhere to those policies.
3. Be prepared for each class or laboratory for which the GTA is responsible.
4. Assign the amount of work proper to the lab or class and to read and grade written work promptly and thoroughly.
5. Post office hours at least 3 hours per week per section, depending upon the course, and to keep those office hours.
6. Report grades accurately and promptly to the faculty in charge of the course.
7. Maintain a professional attitude toward all students in the classes at all times. The ethical standards of behavior for faculty apply equally to GTA's. Negative comments about a course, professor, or GTA made in the presence of students are a violation of ethics. Constructive criticisms should be directed to the faculty in charge or to the Department Head.

GTA's who believe that excessive demands are being made on them by their teaching assignments should bring the matter to the faculty member in charge of the course or to the attention of the Department Head.

Responsibilities and Performance Evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants

The title "Graduate Teaching Assistant" implies that the student will gain considerable experience in several aspects of university classroom or laboratory instruction. This may include preparation and presentation of class materials, assistance in preparing and administering examinations, grading of papers, out-of-class student assistance, and other university teaching responsibilities.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA's) will generally be expected during a semester to 1) prepare and present a minimum of 3 lectures or laboratories; 2) assist the professor responsible for the course in preparing and administering examinations, either in the lecture or laboratory portions of the course, and 3) grade all or parts of the examinations and laboratory assignments.

Where appropriate, the professor responsible for the course will make opportunities for teaching available and guide the GTA in all aspects of preparation and presentation of lectures and laboratories, and in administering and/or grading exams or assignments. Professors and GTA's are expected to hold weekly meetings to review and prepare for upcoming lectures or laboratories.

Professors and GTA's are expected to agree on a plan for evaluating the GTA at the beginning of the semester. The plan will include direct observation of teaching, student evaluations of teaching, and evaluation of other duties such as grading exams. Student evaluations of teaching may employ the standard CSU student course survey or other standard instrument. As part of the evaluation plan, professors are expected to assess the performance of GTA's on two levels. First, GTA's should receive evaluation of lectures or laboratories that they teach soon after they are completed, so that they can improve their teaching performance. Similarly, the professor should notify GTA's as soon as possible about their performance in testing and grading so that problems can be corrected and avoided. Second, the professor should present the GTA with a written evaluation of their overall performance at the end of the semester. A copy of this should be placed into the student's file so that future Graduate Assistant selection

committees will have information about previous Graduate Assistants to guide them in their decisions.

Position Announcements and Selection of Graduate Teaching Assistants

1. Available GTA positions will be announced prior to the beginning of the semester of the appointment. Normally, Fall positions will be announced in March, and Spring positions will be announced in November. The announcement will describe dates of employment, stipend and benefits, duties, supervisor, qualifications, and application procedures. Announcements will be widely distributed and posted for graduate students and faculty in the Department and may be sent to graduate applicants who express an interest in GTA positions. Selection for GTA positions will be in conjunction with the faculty teaching the course and the Department Head.
2. The GTA will be given a written schedule of duties and responsibilities by the supervising faculty at the start of the employment period. Whenever possible, revisions or additions to this schedule will be made through the supervising faculty to the GTA at least one week in advance. These duties and responsibilities will correspond to the descriptions in the announcements.

Training and Orientation of Graduate Teaching Assistants

GTA's should take advantage of opportunities to improve their skills, i.e., orientation and seminars in college teaching. The Institute for Learning and Teaching supports a number of programs for professional development of graduate students interested in teaching (see <http://tilt.colostate.edu/grad/> for a list of programs). The annual Orientation for New Graduate Teaching Assistants is particularly useful and recommended and is conducted during the week prior to Fall Semester by the Institute.

Approximately 200 GTA's have been in attendance. GS 792 (Seminar on College Teaching) is a course that is strongly suggested to GTA's, especially those interested in a future involving teaching.

POLICY FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Research assistantships are similar to teaching assistantships except that recipients are given research assignments. The precise nature of the duties will vary depending on the nature of the discipline, the particular projects under way in the Department, and the interests and skills of the students. Often the work required is related to the student's course work; in some instances it may directly contribute to thesis, dissertation, or other degree requirements. Generally, research assistantship work is an important part of the process of becoming an active participant in the discipline.

Research assistantships are typically funded through external research grants obtained by members of the faculty. A research assistantship contract may provide for payment of tuition, but this is not necessarily the case.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR ON FIELD TRIPS & OFF CAMPUS MEETINGS

During field trips, meetings, and off-campus events, students and faculty are observed by natural resource professionals and the general public. The impressions made reflect upon the University, the College, and the Department. All persons on official field trips are expected to act in a professional manner. Adherences to Colorado's "open container and anti-litter laws" are required, both in and out of Colorado. There will be no use of alcoholic beverages in moving vehicles or during instruction periods on field trips.

ADDITIONAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students or their advisors must provide the following to the Department upon graduation:

1. Electronic copy of thesis or dissertation
2. Completed MS or PhD Assessment form
3. Copies of all Department and Graduate School forms
4. Forwarding address
5. CSU keys

MAINTAINING A ROSTER OF GRADUATE ALUMNI

The Department will maintain a file of graduates with advanced degrees from the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and periodically update address and employment data with the assistance of the faculty. Students are encouraged to inform the CSU Alumni Association of address changes.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DEADLINES

The Graduate School publishes a list of deadline dates for graduation each semester. Be sure to check that list during the semester you intend to graduate.

Milestone	Recommended Date
Selection of graduate committee	Start of second semester
Research Project Proposal	End of second semester; must be completed before data collection begins
Filing of GS-6	End of second semester
Comprehensive or Preliminary Exam	At least one semester before defense/graduation; note that additional coursework may be required so the sooner the better.
Notice of PhD preliminary exam	At least 2 weeks before exam
Report of PhD preliminary exam (GS-16)	Within 2 working days of exam completion
Present Departmental seminar	As close to defense date as possible; ideally, coinciding with defense
Draft of thesis to committee	At least 2 weeks before defense
Notification of PhD defense	At least 2 weeks before defense

APPENDICES

1. Graduate Student Program Design
2. M.S. Assessment form
3. Ph.D. Assessment form
4. Report of Comprehensive Examination (M.S. Students only)
5. Language and Other Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology

(All GS Forms can be found on the Graduate School Website-

<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/current-students/student-resources/>)